

Message Text

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41

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 PM-04 ISO-00 MC-02 SS-15 SP-02 EB-07 AID-05

IGA-02 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSC-05 NSCE-00 ARAE-00 /063 W

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O 011629Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3738

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 2160

FOR ARA ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS AND ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
KLEIN FROM THE AMBASSADOR

EO: 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, CO

SUBJ: GOC PURCHASE OF C-47 AIRCRAFT

REF: BOGOTA 2036, STATE 041090

1. I WANT TO BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION MY CONCERN LEST U.S. BUREAU-
CRATIC ENTANGLEMENTS PREVENT US FROM RESPONDING POSITIVELY TO A
GOC REQUEST TO ACQUIRE EXCESS PROPERTY C-47S FOR USE BY SATENA, A
GOVERNMENT AIRLINE AFFILIATED WITH THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND
OPERATED BY THE COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE. BRIEFLY, THE FACTS OF THE
CASE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

-- SATENA APPROACHED THE MILGRP AND THE EMBASSY OVER A MONTH AGO
WITH A REQUEST TO PURCHASE USED C-47S, WHICH IS AN IDEAL AIRPLANE
FOR THE REMOTE AREAS OF THE COUNTRY WHERE SATENA OPERATES. SA-
TENA STRESSED THE URGENCY OF OBTAINING A FAVORABLE RESPONSE FROM
US INASMUCH AS THE ALTERNATIVE TO THE C-47 IS THE YAK-40 (A MORE
EXPENSIVE AIRCRAFT TO ACQUIRE AND MAINTAIN) WHICH THE SOVIETS ARE
PRESSURING THE COLOMBIANS TO BUY.

-- AS AN INDICATION OF THE URGENCY WITH WHICH SATENA VIEWS THE
MATTER, THE COMPANY'S GENERAL MANAGER (AN AIR FORCE OFFICER) TRAV
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ELLED TO DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB IN EARLY FEBRUARY TO INSPECT C-47S

STORED THERE AND IDENTIFIED NINE AIRCRAFT MERITING FURTHER CONSIDERATION. THE MILGRP HERE HELPED TO ARRANGE THE TRIP (WITH COMPLETE COOPERATION FROM THE U.S. AIR FORCE) AND A MILGRP OFFICER ACCOMPANIED THE SATENA MANAGER.

-- STATE AND DOD/DSAA WERE NOTIFIED OF THE TRIP, THE REASONS THEREFORE, AND OF THE FACT THAT SATENA HAD IDENTIFIED NINE AIRCRAFT FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION. THE MILGRP REQUESTED AN IMMEDIATE EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION OF THE AIRCRAFT TO DETERMINE THE COST OF PUTTING THEM IN FLYING CONDITION. THE E AND E HAS NEITHER BEEN AUTHORIZED NOR PERFORMED.

-- WHILE THE U.S. AIR FORCE IS WILLING TO FACILITATE THE SALE, IT CANNOT MOVE WITHOUT STATE DEPARTMENT CONCURRENCE. GIVEN THE ESSENTIALLY CIVILIAN MISSION OF SATENA, STATE APPARENTLY HAS CONCLUDED THAT AN FMS CASH SALE CANNOT BE AUTHORIZED AND IS NOW LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING THE AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE UNDER SECTION 607 OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT. THERE IS, HOWEVER, NO ASSURANCE THAT A FAVORABLE 607 DECISION WILL BE FORTHCOMING.

2. WE NOW SEEM TO BE CAUGHT UP IN ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE SITUATIONS WHERE, BECAUSE OF A LACK OF BUREAUCRATIC WILL ON OUR PART, WE ARE UNABLE TO RESPOND QUICKLY TO A LEGITIMATE REQUEST FROM A FRIENDLY COUNTRY. THE COLOMBIANS WANT THE C-47S (WHICH ARE NOT AVAILABLE ON THE COMMERCIAL MARKET) AND WE SHOULD WANT TO SELL THEM. MEANWHILE, THE SOVIETS ARE MOVING QUICKLY - THEY WILL SEND A YAK 40 HERE FOR AT LEAST A MONTH FOR DEMONSTRATION PURPOSES AND REPORTEDLY HAVE INVITED A GROUP OF COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE OFFICERS TO THE SOVIET UNION.

3. THE PROBLEM OF COURSE GOES BEYOND THE THREAT OF SOVIET INROADS IN THE AVIATION FIELD. THE COLOMBIAN REQUEST HAS BEEN IN WASHINGTON FOR OVER A MONTH. THEY VIEW THE DEAL IN REASONABLY STRAIGHTFORWARD TERMS - WE HAVE SURPLUS TRANSPORTATION AIRCRAFT AND THEY WANT TO BUY THEM. A CONTINUED DELAY ON OUR PART (I CAN'T IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITY OF OUR TURNING DOWN THE REQUEST) ONLY SERVES TO REINFORCE THE GOC'S ALREADY INCIPIENT DOUBTS ABOUT OUR ABILITY TO PERFORM.

4. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THIS CASE AND TO MAKE A CONFIDENTIAL

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FORMAL OFFER OF SALE TO SATENA. IN ORDER TO DO THIS, THE DEPARTMENT MUST AUTHORIZE A WRITTEN OFFER TO SATENA. THE WRITTEN OFFER SHOULD INCLUDE "AS IS WHERE IS" PRICE AND SHOULD STATE THAT EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES WILL BE INITIATED TO DETERMINE THE ADDITIONAL COST OF PUTTING EACH AIRCRAFT INTO FLYING CONDITION. AS FINAL POINT, THE AUTHORIZATION LETTER SHOULD BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE THE TERMS OF THE SALE, THE CHANNEL TO BE USED (AID EXCESS PROPERTY) AND RESTRICTIONS, IF ANY, TO BE PLACED ON THE USE

OF THE AIRCRAFT.

5. I WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THE OFFER TO SATENA THIS WEEK
AND I WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ASSISTANCE YOU MAY BE ABLE TO GIVE ME.
VAKY

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NNN

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